

DECLUTTERING TIPS FOR *EMPTY NESTERS*

It's not always easy letting go of the things you've accumulated throughout your life. Once your kids have grown up and moved out, this may be a great time for decluttering and organizing your empty nest.



This process can quickly feel overwhelming and frustrating. If you're afraid to get started because it seems like so much work, try doing a smaller number of tasks at a time. **When you take small steps to declutter and organize your home, you can complete the task much more easily.**

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1. ASSESS YOUR STUFF

Go through your storage unit, attic, garage, and rooms and take inventory each room.



2. START WITH IMPORTANT PAPERS

Review documents, files, photographs, and any special or personal items you plan to pass down to your kids or other family members. Scan photos and important documents to a thumb drive or cloud storage file to preserve them and so they are easy to find in a hurry. Consider using a fire safe box at home or rent a safe deposit box at your bank. If you don't already have a shredder, get one and shred all important papers you no longer need.

3. TACKLE ONLY ONE ROOM AT A TIME

This will make your task appear much less daunting. If you're working in multiple rooms at the same time it becomes too overwhelming. Select a room that you can tackle in a day, rather than the most challenging one in the house. Once you've chosen your room, start early so you have as many daylight hours as possible to work on your cleaning and decluttering. Complete each room before moving on to another room.

4. CATEGORIZE ITEMS

Go through everything in your starting room and sort out items you no longer want. Everything that you touch in the room should go into one of four categories:

- Things you want to throw away,
- Things you want to donate or sell,
- Things that should remain where they are,
- Things that you want to keep but need to be in another room.



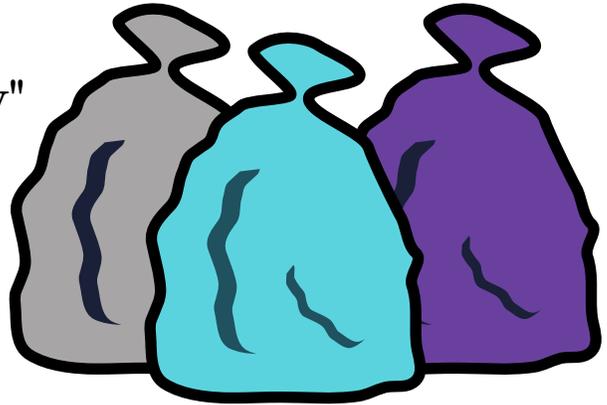
Use this sorting technique for every item in the room. When you're finished, you should have four distinctive piles or areas in the room. Each item in the room will be in one of the four piles.

5. BE RUTHLESS

Any clothes you haven't worn in years, like those blue jeans you've been holding on to should go. After all, why put all that pressure on your self to fit into them again? Let it go. And those household items that you purchased while watching a late night infomercial but that you've never used should go as well.

6. REMOVE TRASH

Simply taking all the "throw away" stuff out of the room is going to make a very large dent. Keep in mind that personal paperwork should be shredded rather than simply put into the garbage.



7. REMOVE DONATION ITEMS

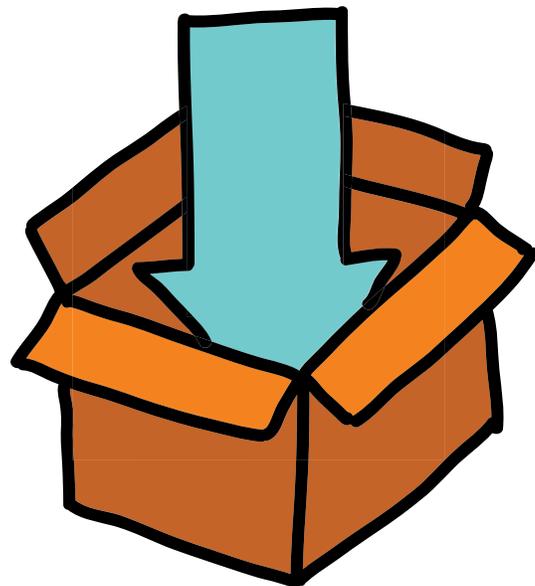
Anything that you intend to sell, give away or donate should come out next. Store these items somewhere else in the house for now. Continue to add to this section from each room in your home until you're ready to make one single donation or yard sale.

8. SORT THE "BELONGS ELSEWHERE" ITEMS

Do not simply move these items into another room; otherwise you'll need to sort them again. Create a box or container for each room for which you have items. Make sure that you definitely want to keep them so that you can transfer them into the right room without having to sort them again later.

9. ORGANIZE WHAT'S LEFT

Now that you've removed large chunks of "stuff" from your room, you can organize everything that remains. When you're only working with the things that are supposed to be in the room, decluttering and organizing becomes much simpler.



10. REPEAT THIS PROCESS

Continue steps 1-6 in each room until you've finished the whole house. When you handle one room at a time, the process is much simpler and less stressful.

Once you've finished organizing your house, take a few minutes each day to ensure everything you've used during the day is back in place so you can continue to enjoy your "new" clutter-free home.

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